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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Letter dated 3 December 1992 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the letter by His Excellency Mr. Ilija Djukić, Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, addressed to the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda item 69.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIĆ
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

ANNEX

Letter from the Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia addressed to the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference

The Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) gives me the opportunity to address you regarding the civil war that is going on in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the current crisis in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. That issue, as I understand, will be one of the most important items on the agenda of the OIC Meeting. I would like to thank you in advance for your kindness in conveying this message to the distinguished colleagues the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries participating in the Conference.

My concern and that of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is all the greater because of rumours that, in violation of the existing prohibitions contained in United Nations Security Council resolutions, the delivery of modern weapons to one of the warring parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina could be intensified, which could have disastrous effects on the efforts to bring about an end to the war by political means. The most important among those efforts are those undertaken in accordance with United Nations resolutions and the Geneva International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, which is a follow-up to the London Conference. These two Conferences are being held under the highly esteemed chairmanship of Mr. Cyrus Vance, on behalf of the United Nations, and Lord David Owen, on behalf of the European Community. Although the efforts to restore peace and tranquillity among the Muslim, Serbian and Croatian peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina have not been as successful as we expected them to be, we believe that the Geneva Conference is the only generally accepted framework for peaceful efforts and endeavours to remove all the consequences of the practice of "ethnic cleansing", which my Government vehemently opposes, regardless of who is carrying it out.

I take this opportunity to convey to you that Mr. Vance and Lord Owen positively assess the readiness of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to support their efforts by using its limited material means and a certain degree of political influence to de-escalate the tragic war of the three nations who lived together throughout the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina. All the three nations suffer in this horrible civil war. The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was brought about by the rash and unthoughtful acts of the largest part of the international community, but also by the ambitions to install in Bosnia a government without equal representation of the three nations, which are, according to the present Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, equal constituent components of that State. The Co-Chairmen of the Geneva (London) Conference, as well as most of the world community, recognize today that the terrible war crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been encouraged and dramatically accelerated by premature recognition of its full sovereignty, without prior agreement of the three nations constituting it, as is required in all constitutional documents of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The crisis has been especially widened by complete disregard for the clearly expressed will of the Serbian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. That people had unanimously declared itself in favour of such a constitutional structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina as would guarantee constitutional balance and reflect the agreed interests of Muslims, Serbs and Croatians before the war broke out.

Those were the fatal mistakes made by the largest part of the international community. Arms shipments and incitement to the flare-up of war would, I believe, be even more fatal mistakes. All of us who are endeavouring to end the war and "ethnic cleansing" must be aware of all that has contributed to its flare-up. You and your distinguished colleagues participating at this Ministerial Meeting at Jiddah know well that none of the ethnic peoples, including Muslims, constitute a majority population in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is a country inhabited by three peoples, none of whom is in a majority. Their equal treatment in a country like Bosnia and Herzegovina must be a basis for seeking a stable solution to the crisis. Therefore, it is not pertinent, I do assure you, nor can it help bring war to an end, to claim that there is "Serbian aggression" in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus, the Governments less knowledgeable of facts than your own gain the impression that Serbs have come to Bosnia and Herzegovina as aggressors and not that they have been living there for centuries. Until 1981, according to official and irrefutable data, Serbs even formed an absolute majority in Bosnia.

I am confident that you share my opinion that such false information could not contribute to cooling off tempers. As far as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is concerned, she withdrew her last soldier from Bosnia and Herzegovina on 19 May 1992. This has not been denied in international documents either. It is also confirmed by the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has further made available humanitarian corridors from Belgrade to Sarajevo. We have suggested, and this idea is now being implemented, that United Nations observers be placed on the borders between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We have invested all our political influence to achieve an agreement between Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the United Nations Protection Force over deployment of international observers to monitor heavy weapons and lifting the blockade of Sarajevo.

The current Conference at Jiddah can, in my opinion, greatly contribute to calming the situation by sending a message of peace and dialogue in Bosnia and Herzegovina rather than a message of war, revenge and "struggle until final victory" by any of the parties involved. None of the parties can beat the simple truth that the only solution is to reach an acceptable political settlement verified by the international community and supported by the authorized representatives of all the three peoples - Muslim, Serbian and Croatian. Anything short of that is a dangerous illusion. Adding more oil to the flames of this war would also entail responsibility for spreading the tragedy of war as the severe Bosnian winter approaches.

Yugoslavia has had friendly relations and cooperation and enjoyed the confidence of all Islamic countries for years. Muslims in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia live in our multi-ethnic community as equal members. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is an open country that has nothing to hide to foreign visitors and observers. We are also open to any verification of these facts throughout the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

We are strongly committed to the proved principle that more weapons always mean more war and that more understanding and negotiation among the authorized representatives of the nations concerned pave the way to peace. The tragic example of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the war is being waged by the three peoples who until recently, especially until its premature international recognition, lived as friends and in peace, is a warning to all of us. There can be no solution in Bosnia and Herzegovina if anything is imposed on any of its three constituent peoples. The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia reiterates on this occasion as well that it has absolutely no territorial claims against Bosnia and Herzegovina. All that is acceptable to Serbs, Muslims and Croatians is acceptable to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia too. We are opposed only to what deprives any of the Bosnian peoples of their right to live in a State on whose constitutional structure they can exert full influence on an equal footing with representatives of the two other peoples.

I express once again my belief that you and the current Meeting of the OIC Ministers at Jiddah have truly the interest of peace at heart, in accordance with the positions of the United Nations and the London (Geneva) Conference, which my Government fully supports.

Ilija DJUKIĆ